

Weeds: Broadleaf plantain: *Plantago major*



Photo by: R. Parker

Use IPM (Integrated Pest Management) for most successful weed management.

Family: Plantaginaceae
Cycle: Perennial
Plant Type: Broadleaf

Biology

Description: Broadleaf plantain leaves are all basal, forming a low-growing rosette. Broadleaf plantain bears many fibrous roots, from which new plants can occasionally arise. The crown of broadleaf plantain is not woolly or hairy. The leaves have several prominent, parallel veins and may be lightly hairy. The leaf blade is typically three to seven inches long and one to two inches wide, abruptly narrowing where it joins the petiole, which may be as long as the leaves. The margins of the leaves are often wavy. Flowers are borne in dense clusters from about midlength to the tip of leafless shoots, sometimes reaching 5 to 15 inches tall. Individual flowers are inconspicuous and yellowish-white. Seeds are glossy light to dark brown and about 1/16 inch long. Broadleaf plantain may be confused with buckhorn plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).

Habitat: Broadleaf plantain is often found in lawns, gardens, and other cultivated or disturbed areas including pastures and roadsides.

Management Options

- Careful digging is useful to manage weed populations. However, digging can carry undesirable weed seed to the surface and foster further germination.
- Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants.
- Chemical management options are outlined in the PNW Weed Management Handbook available through WSU at 1-800-723-1763. There is also information for home gardeners at <http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense>.